

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

THE BERKSHIRE GAS COMPANY	)	
	)	D.T.E. 02-56
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**GROUND RULES**

This proceeding shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c. 30A and 220 C.M.R. §§ 1.00 et seq., the Procedural Rules of the Department of Telecommunications and Energy ("Department"). In addition, the following ground rules shall apply to the conduct of the proceedings in this matter:

1.     Information Requests

Information requests are prehearing discovery in the nature of interrogatories and requests for documents (Mass. R. Civ. P. 33, 34).

Responses to information requests will not be part of the record unless marked and admitted into evidence.

Parties shall make a good faith effort to provide responses to information requests within 7 calendar days of receipt of the request, unless otherwise indicated. Where the computed response date is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the response shall be due on the next following Department business day. This time for responses to information requests shall not apply where the established procedural schedule sets a different time. The parties must first attempt resolution of any discovery dispute before coming to the Department for assistance.

For purposes of discovery, a document shall be deemed to include writings, drawings, graphs, charts, photographs, phono-records, and other data compilations from which data can be obtained, or translated, if necessary, by the respondent through detection devices into reasonably usable form.

2.     Exchange of Materials

The parties shall make arrangements for the expeditious exchange of materials, particularly discovery material, through the use of hand delivery, facsimile transmission ("FAX"), or other speedy means of delivery. Where material is delivered by means of

FAX, a follow-up copy of the material must be otherwise delivered (use of mail delivery may be appropriate).

3. Record Requests

Responses to record requests are written substitutes to oral answers where fault of memory or complexity of subject precludes a responsive answer by the witness in the hearing. As such, they are part of the record and the evidence, unless challenged as unresponsive and expunged in whole or part. Record requests shall not be used as a substitute for discovery or as a substitute for re-direct examination.

The ordinary time for response will be the fifth Department working day following the day on which the request is made.

Objections to record requests shall be made at the time the request is made, and in no event later than the end of the next Department working day.

4. Protected Material

Where information or material is sought that is considered proprietary or protected by one party, the parties should discuss the use of a non-disclosure agreement before coming to the Department for protection or compelled submission.

The Department will make a reasonable effort to extend protection where appropriate within the requirements of the law and in consideration of the policy interests regarding public access. A party requesting proprietary treatment must submit its request in writing and state the reasons therefore. The party seeking such treatment has the burden to demonstrate that the materials should be afforded the treatment requested in light of the presumption that such information is a public record.

5. Format of Document Filings

All discovery and record request documents filed with the Department and all documents offered as exhibits shall be accurately punched to fit a standard three-hole binder. All documents shall be accompanied by a cover letter describing the filing and noting the distribution of copies.

Responses to information and record requests shall contain the following information: (1) set and question number, (2) recitation of request, and (3) identity of person who will support the response.

6. Offering of Exhibits

The proponent of an exhibit must offer the Department six bench copies of the proposed exhibit (standard three-hole punch). Nonconforming documents will not be marked. Where material exceeding 25 pages is offered for marking and such material is already in the possession of all parties (e.g., information request responses), the proponent may, no later than 9:00 a.m. on the day the material is to be offered for marking, inform all parties and the Department's Gas Division of the intended use of such material. Nonetheless, the proponent of any such document must provide the Hearing Office with a punched copy for marking.

If only a part of a document is offered for marking and another party wishes to use the omitted part(s) in questioning or on brief, then that party must enter the missing part(s) into the record.

Before the close of hearings, each party that offers exhibits shall submit a listing for those exhibits that presents (1) the exhibit number and (2) a description of the exhibit.

7. Late Filed Exhibits

Exhibits offered after the close of the hearings, if objected to by any party, labor under a heavy burden of untimeliness, for they would not be subject to cross-examination or rebuttal. Late filed exhibits must be accompanied by a motion to reopen the record and supported by appropriate affidavits. Only for good cause shown, in the face of an objection, will such exhibits be marked and admitted into evidence.

8. Exhibit Format

Any exhibit offered in this proceeding must contain an internally consistent and usable form of referencing. While most documents that are offered as exhibits have pre-numbered pages, some offered exhibits (especially those exhibits consisting of excerpts from more than one document or consisting of a compilation of notes) have pages that are not numbered or are not consistently numbered.

Documents of three pages or more without a preexisting referencing system must be marked with consecutive page numbers before the document is offered as an exhibit or before it is otherwise distributed for use in the hearing. Where it is necessary to supply page numbers for an exhibit, the proponent of the exhibit should add the numbers in some way that differentiates the additions from the preexisting text and should identify his method of addition on the record upon presentation for marking.

Documents without an acceptable referencing system will not be marked for identification and may not be used at the hearing.

9. Number of Copies

The Department requires copies to be filed in the following numbers:

Prefiled Testimony - 1 original and 5 copies

Information Requests and Responses - 1 original and 5 copies

Responses to Record Requests - 1 original and 5 copies

Bulk Responses (100 pages or more) - 1 original and 1 copy

Pleadings, Briefs, Motions, Memoranda - 1 original and 5 copies

10. Address of Filings

The original of all filings must be filed with Mary Cottrell, Secretary of the Department. Where 5 copies of a filing are required under these ground rules, one copy must be submitted to Denise Desautels, Hearing Officer, and 4 copies must be submitted to Andreas Thanos, Assistant Director, Gas Division. Where 1 copy of a filing is required, the copy must be submitted to Denise Desautels, Hearing Officer.

11. Communications Between the Parties

Where information requests are sent to a party by means of FAX (see ground rule number 2), the FAX must be accompanied by telephone notification of the transmission. Failure to make prompt telephone notification may affect the timing of the response to the information request.

12. Hearing Arrangements

An evidentiary hearing will be conducted at the offices of the Department at One South Station, Boston, Massachusetts 02110. **The hearings will begin at 1:00 p.m. on November 6, 2002.** Adjustments to the stated hearing arrangements may be made at the discretion of the Hearing Officer.

These ground rules are deemed consistent with the orderly conduct of this proceeding. Exceptions to any ground rule may be made by the Hearing Officer for good cause shown.

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Date

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Denise Desautels, Hearing Officer

cc: Mary Cottrell, Secretary  
Paul Afonso, General Counsel  
Rebecca Hanson, Assistant General Counsel  
George Yiankos, Director, Gas Division  
Andreas Thanos, Assistant Director, Gas Division  
Staff As Assigned  
Service List